



Sunset by Cherrie Corey

# Plan Summary

Concord is located at the confluence of the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers, in rolling terrain of glacial deposits. A suburb of Boston, the town is roughly 26 square miles and hosts a population of approximately 19,000 people. Rivers, railroads, and road systems link Concord to surrounding towns and beyond, and have stimulated agricultural, residential, and recreational development over time. Extensive wetlands and strong efforts to preserve the historic, rural character of the town have limited development in certain areas, thereby protecting many of today's open space and recreation resources. But today, development threatens to spread. Continued awareness and planning to protect the highly sought and much-valued open space and recreation resources in Town is needed.

Concord has a long history of conservation planning that has led to permanent protection of a significant portion of its forests, farmland, and wetlands. Of the 15,936 acres of land in Concord, approximately 6,119.84 acres, (about 38%) are permanently protected open space. Since the 2004 Open Space and Recreation Plan, approximately 335 acres have been protected through direct acquisition by the Town or land trusts or by Conservation Restriction, while 105 acres were developed. During this same time period, of the 10 parcels taken out of the 61A program, five were purchased by the Town and/or land trusts (at approximately \$200,000/acre), thus maintaining almost 58 acres in active agricultural production that would have otherwise been lost. Concord citizens show great interest in town planning and desire continued stewardship of open space resources to preserve the town's unique character and meet the challenges of the future, including climate change, food and water security, and habitat conservation.

Through two community meetings, a town-wide survey, and ongoing interactions, four overarch-

ing goals were identified for this plan.

- 1) Protect water resources and biodiversity.
- 2) Improve connectivity and access to recreational resources.
- 3) Protect agricultural land including fields, meadows, and orchards.
- 4) Improve collaboration and land management.

This plan builds upon previous plans in determining actions to address the goals above. Specifically, the 1992 and 2004 *Open Space and Recreation Plans* delineate an Open Space Framework, which identifies three areas of significant conservation interest: large natural areas, large agricultural areas, and wildlife and water protection corridors (see Section 2 for full discussion). The current plan utilizes this scope of interests in identifying critical parcels of farmland, important habitat, and water resources to be conserved within the areas identified by the Open Space Framework.

Areas where overlapping conservation interests



can be achieved by protecting a specific area are highlighted as especially important to the Open Space Framework. These goals should be carried out in a manner consistent with the Town's Sustainable Management Principles identified as: 1) reduce dependence upon fossil fuels, underground metals, and minerals; 2) reduce dependence upon synthetic chemicals and other manufactured substances; 3) reduce encroachment upon nature; and, 4) meet human needs fairly and efficiently.

Additionally, this plan suggests mechanisms for protecting farmland, including transfer of development rights and agricultural overlay districts. The plan encourages the formation of

stronger regional partnerships through increased contact, communication, and collaborative planning. Finally, public education and outreach regarding environmental and conservation issues are suggested to engender a sense of civic responsibility and increased awareness of the significance of individual contributions.

Concord has made great strides in conservation planning. This report seeks to continue this strong tradition by providing a resource for town planners and concerned citizens to make informed decisions related to open space and recreation planning over the course of the next seven years.



*Punkatasset Hill From Great Meadows by Cherrie Corey*